NOC AND IF SUSTAINABILITY CASE STUDIES

The world faces significant challenges across a wide spectrum of economic, social and environmental matters. The Olympic Movement has both an opportunity and a duty to actively contribute to the global sustainability debate in line with its vision of “Building a better world through sport”.

With this in mind, and in response to Olympic Agenda 2020, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) launched the International Federation (IF) Sustainability Project in 2016 to obtain an overview of IFs’ sustainability initiatives – identifying common topics, challenges and good practices while also sharing information among the IFs.

One outcome of the project was a series of case studies illustrating how IFs are actively contributing towards a more sustainable world. As part of the IOC’s objective to “profile the role of the Olympic Movement in sustainability through the aggregation of information and collective reporting”, it was agreed that the identification and sharing of information contributes to the holistic integration of sustainability and should be continued. These case studies, which now also showcase National Olympic Committees’ (NOCs) best practices, form part of a strategic support system given to the Olympic Movement through the IOC Sustainability Strategy.

Each case study is aligned with one or more of the IOC’s five sustainability focus areas: infrastructure & natural sites; sourcing & resource management; mobility; workforce; and climate. They are also aligned with one or more of the United Nations’ (UN) framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide a common framework for organisations to explain how they plan to contribute to sustainable development and tackle the key global sustainability challenges. This framework is pivotal for the Olympic Movement – in September 2015, the UN General Assembly confirmed the important role that sport can play in supporting the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs.

“Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognise the growing contribution of sport to the realisation of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.”

Paragraph 37, UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
Having successfully launched a sustainability strategy in 2016, World Sailing has since taken further steps towards embracing sustainability at the core of the organisation and the sport. These steps provided a set of objectives and target actions that formalised the intentions of World Sailing to drive sustainability and open up further opportunities.

One of the first steps was to set up an independent Sustainability Commission, comprised of eight experts from five countries. Together with relevant staff, they developed a long-term sustainability vision (Sustainability Agenda 2030) and proposed a set of 59 ambitious but achievable sustainability targets. Leveraging the presence of the 145 National Federation (NF) representatives at its annual conference in November 2017, World Sailing announced a four-month consultation period concerning these targets. In addition, the sailing community was asked to provide feedback through an online survey with three possible responses: support; do not support; and not applicable.

The commission reviewed 305 answers from respondents in 75 countries across every continent. The consultation resulted in numerous changes to the targets; the timeframes for implementation of some targets were brought forward, some extended, and the language used was revised for clarity. The commission produced an amended version of Sustainability Agenda 2030 containing 56 different targets for the approval of World Sailing’s council.

With the least supported target still achieving a 70 per cent support rate – along with a compelling average support rate across all targets of 86.9 per cent – the council unanimously approved Sustainability Agenda 2030 in May 2018. In order to effect its implementation, World Sailing has committed five per cent of its sponsorship revenue to the project.

OBJECTIVES
The open consultation process of Sustainability Agenda 2030 aimed to:
- Involve the sailing community and stakeholders in the decision-making process.
- Learn from different stakeholders’ perspectives how best to improve and redefine sustainability targets.
- Gain legitimacy through support from stakeholders to achieve the targets.
- Drive commitment from stakeholders by redefining sustainability targets according to stakeholders’ capabilities.
LESSONS LEARNED

- Feedback from open consultations facilitates the redefining and revision of targets.
- Using an annual conference as a platform to increase commitment enables you to access a large number of relevant stakeholders.
- An open process attracts sustainability experts who are passionate about your sport and are willing to share their knowledge on a pro-bono basis.
- A sustainability strategy divided into targets helps to attain more and varied sponsors as they can either support a specific target or the strategy as a whole, while easily discerning how the alignment with SDGs complements their own corporate sustainability targets.

Sustainability Agenda 2030 received strong support from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and United Nations (UN) agencies, but most importantly from World Sailing partners and NFs, who already engage in related sustainability initiatives, increasing the opportunities to replicate and amplify them.

EVALUATION

The council’s approval of World Sailing’s Sustainability Agenda 2030 is the expression of an entire sport’s community and its stakeholders being part of the decision-making process. The steps and path of open consultation that World Sailing adopted is proof of transparency, inclusion and commitment to the wider sailing community. World Sailing gained legitimacy through commitment from sailing stakeholders to achieve Sustainability Agenda 2030 targets, as they are built upon the voice and contributions of the entire sailing community.

“THANKS TO THE WORK PUT IN BY WORLD SAILING’S SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION AND OPEN DIALOGUE WITH OUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS, WE HAVE CLEAR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES THAT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED ACROSS OUR EVENTS, AT WORLD SAILING’S HEADQUARTERS AND WITHIN THE GLOBAL SAILING COMMUNITY.”

ANDY HUNT, WORLD SAILING CEO

CONTACT: Dan Reading, World Sailing Sustainability Programme Manager dan.reading@sailing.org
www.sailing.org